

Message Text

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ACTION OES-06

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 FEA-01 ACDA-10
CIAE-00 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 EB-08 NRC-07
DODE-00 ERDA-07 PM-04 H-02 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-15 TRSE-00 /131 W
-----280515Z 070622 /14

R 271726Z JAN 77
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5125
INFO ERDA GERMANTOWN
ERDA WASHDC
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
USMISSION EC BRUSSELS
USMISSION IAEA VIENNA

UNCLAS BONN 01640

DEPT PASS NRC

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: TECH, ENRG, GW
SUBJ: GERMAN STUDIES ON NUCLEAR ACCIDENTS

REF: BRASILIA 0539

1. EMBASSY RECEIVED A COPY OF THE REPORT MENTIONED IN
REFTEL. THE STUDY CONSISTS OF TWO INDEPENDENT REPORTS
TITLED "STUDIES FOR THE COMPARISON OF THE MAXIMUM
CONCEIVABLE ACCIDENT IN A REPROCESSING PLANT AND A
NUCLEAR REACTOR" AND "RADIOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF MASSIVE

RELEASE OF FISSILE MATERIAL OUT OF PRESSURIZED WATER
REACTORS". THEY WERE PREPARED BY THE FEDERAL INSTITUTE
FOR REACTOR SAFETY (IRS) FOR THE MINISTRY FOR THE
INTERIOR (BMI). THESE CONFIDENTIAL (INTERNAL
USE ONLY--WORKING DRAFT) STUDIES CALCULATE THE HAZARD
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POTENTIAL OF A REPROCESSING PLANT AND A NUCLEAR
REACTOR. IN ORDER TO MAKE A COMPARATIVE EVALUATION
FOR THESE TWO TYPES OF NUCLEAR FACILITY, THE AUTHORS
USED A METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH INVOLVING THE
ASSUMPTION OF A HIGHLY IMPROBABLE TOTAL FAILURE OF ALL
SAFETY SYSTEMS. THEY DEVELOPED NUMERICAL FACTORS UNDER
AN ASSUMPTION OF UNFAVORABLE METEOROLOGICAL CONDITIONS

AND SIMPLE, BUT IMPROBABLE MODELS FOR EVENTS DURING THE INCIDENT, SUCH AS THE DISTRIBUTION OF FISSION PRODUCTS.

2. THE STUDIES BECAME SUBJECT TO PUBLIC DISCUSSION WHEN THE FEDERAL UNION OF CITIZENS' INITIATIVES (BUNDES-VERBAND BUEGERINITIATIVEN UMWELTSCHUTZ-BBU) PUBLISHED ITS OWN CALCULATION OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF A NUCLEAR ACCIDENT BASED ON DATA FROM THE STUDIES. ACCORDING TO BBU'S CALCULATIONS, UNDER "REASONABLE ASSUMPTIONS", THE WORST OF THE ASSUMED ACCIDENTS WOULD LEAD TO SOME 30 MILLION FATALITIES WITHIN GERMANY. GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS HAVE NOT COMMENTED ON THIS NUMBER BUT ASSERT THAT THE STUDIES WERE ONLY OF THEORETICAL VALUE BECAUSE OF THE HIGH IMPROBABILITY OF THE ASSUMED ACCIDENTS. FURTHERMORE, THE SCIENTIFIC VALIDITY OF THE IRS CONCLUSIONS STILL HAVE TO BE EXAMINED BY BMI-EXPERTS. NONETHELESS THE STUDIES WERE DECLASSIFIED AND OPENED FOR PUBLIC DISCUSSION AFTER THE WEEKLY MAGAZINE "DER STERN" OF JAN 13 GAVE EXTENSIVE COVERAGE TO THE BBU CALCULATIONS AND ALLEGATIONS THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS TRYING TO CONCEAL IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR THE PUBLIC DISCUSSION ABOUT THE ACCEPTABILITY OF NUCLEAR ENERGY.
STOESSEL

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: STUDIES, ACCIDENTS, NUCLEAR HAZARDS, NUCLEAR SAFETY, RADIOACTIVE WASTES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 27-Jan-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977BONN01640
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770030-0946
Format: TEL
From: BONN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770114/aaaaalwi.tel
Line Count: 87
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 46cf38d0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION OES
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 BRASILIA 539
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 30-Sep-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3489494
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: GERMAN STUDIES ON NUCLEAR ACCIDENTS
TAGS: TECH, ENRG, GE
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/46cf38d0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009